IIAC Complimentary Card Passes issued to Ex-MPs at Railways cost, were cancelled w.e.f. 06.01.1999 due to a judgement by Allahabad High Court in a Public Interest Litigation. Subsequently, on the basis of an Ordinance promulgated by the President on 18.01.1999, instructions were issued on 02.02.1999 to permit Ex-MPs the same travel facilities on the authority of Ex-MP photo identity cards issued to them by the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha Secretariat. There is no change in the norm in respect of passes issued to freedom fighters. Disabled are not issued any free passes.

Decline in freight traffic

1207. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a decline in the freight traffic on Indian Railways during 1998-99;

(b) if so, the target set and the actuals in this regard during 1996-97,1997-98 and 1998-99;

(c) the details of reasons for decline in the freight traffic; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The target and actuals of freight traffic on Indian Railways for 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 are as under:

(Figures in million tonnes)

Year	Target	Actuals
1996-97	410.00	409.02
1997-98	430.00	429.38
1998-99 (April-Jan.)	369.10	343.40

(c) Drop in demand from the major core sectors of the economy which include power, coal, foodgrains, cement and steel has been responsible for the fall in the loading level.

(d) Ministry of Railways is maintaining continuous close liaison both with the rail-user organisations as well as the concerned Ministries/Departments for maximising movement of traffic by rail. Also close monitoring is being done both at the field as well as at the Railway Ministry levels to ensure smooth movement of freight traffic.

Killing of five persons by local train in Calcutta

1208. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item 'Bidhannagar a death trap for passengers— Risk your life or miss the train' appearing in the "Statesman", Calcutta dated 14th February, 1999 killing of five people by a local train on 12th February, 1999;

(b) if so, the immediate action taken by the Railway authorities to improve the public address system; and

(c) the short-term and long-term plan to avoid such tragedies, including broadening of over-bridge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINIS-TER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) To ensure safe journey of passengers as well as to prevent accidents, arrangements have been made at Bidhannagar Road Railways Station to ensure that the Public Address System is in working order. Battery back up is also available in case of failure of local power supply and one additional point of loud ;

speaker is also being provided. Long term action plan for improvement in announcement system and the proposal for broadening the over-bridge is under examination.

माल परिवहन द्वारा रेल की आय

1209. **श्री डी0पी0 यादव** : क्या **रेल मंत्री** यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) वर्ष, 1997-98 के अन्त तक माल परिवहन से रेलवे को कुल कितनी आय हुई; और

(ख) क्या विभाग माल प्रभारों को बढ़ाने पर विचार कर रहा है; तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है?

रेल मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री, संसदीय कार्य मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री तथा योजना और कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयन मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री राम नाईक) : (क) वर्ष 1997-98 के लिए माल की ढुलाई के माध्यम से रेलों द्वारा अर्जित कुल आय 19866.38 करोड़ रुपए भी।

(ख) 1999-2000 के रेलवे बजट में सभी पण्यों के लिए 1.4.99 से सामान्यतः सभी पण्यों की मालभाड़ा दरों में 4 प्रतिशत तक की वृद्धि करने का प्रस्ताव किया गया है।

Rail line capacity

1210. SHRI C. O POULOSE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state whether, in view of the situation arising out of rail line capacity con straints, saturation in important routes and shortages of wagons, passenger bogies and locomotives etc., Government propose to take any steps, as short-term and long-term strategies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SRHI RAM NAIK): Steps are taken on a continual basis for meeting the situation arising out of line capacity constraints and saturation in important routes. The sections which are identified as saturated are taken up for improving their line capacity. The important methods of improving the line capacity of a section are as below:—

(i) Reducing length of block sections

(ii) Improved signalling

(iii) Multiplexing of Lines

(iv) New Lines and Gauge Conversion Works

(v) Reducing speed differential between the fastest and slowest trains.

(vi) Increasing the tractive effort of locomotives.

Availability of wagons and locomotives is adequate as per the current level of freight traffic. Review of demand of ' coaches is an ongoing exercise. Additional trains are introduced on the basis of rute-wise passenger growth, availability of terminal facilities, gauge conversion and maintenance capacities.

The steps being taken to run additional passenger services are as follows:—

(i) Full utilising the capacity of the two Railway production units i.e. Integral Coach Factory and Rail Coach Factory.

(ii) Increasing the lengths of existing coaching trains instead of starting new trains.

(iii) Introduce fast stop-start trains like DEMUMEMU/EMU's

(iv) To overcome the resource crunch, taking necessary steps to increase internal generation, as also to obtain more budgetary support.

(v) Resorting to alternative sources of finance by inviting private participation etc.

Arrears payable by the Railways for GRP

1211. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the arrears payable to various State Governments by the Railways, as on date, on account of expenditure on GRP, state-wise; and